

University of Lethbridge
Department of Economics
Economics 3710
Economic Analysis of Canadian Public Issues

Spring 2012

Dr. Richard Mueller

Class Time: TTh 15:05-14:20

Place: W-870

Office: D-550

Office Hours: TTh 10:45-12:00 and by appointment

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Prerequisite: Third-year standing (i.e., a minimum of 60 credit hours).

Required Material: Steven D. Levitt and Stephen J. Dubner. *Freakonomics: A Rogue Economist Explores the Hidden Side of Everything*. New York: William Morrow, 2005 (or latest edition).

Thaler, Richard H., and Cass R. Sunstein. 2009. *Nudge: Improving Decisions About Health, Wealth and Happiness*. Toronto: Penguin Books.

Other readings will be online and outlined in a separate reading list.

Course Objectives:

The purpose of this course is to apply economic analysis to current Canadian public policy issues. Seminars will begin with a review of some current of the economic thinking, followed by a more in-depth analysis of some related readings and discussion. Given the nature of this course, topics may be added and deleted throughout the semester. The focus of all term papers will be "Reforming Post-secondary Education in Canada."

Course Readings and Classroom Discussions:

To facilitate class discussion, students are expected to read the course materials before attending lectures. At least one to two days before the specific class period questions related to the readings will be sent via e-mail. These questions are designed to highlight the important points in each article, to think about policies that might be appropriate given the results of the literature, and to keep us on track during our discussions.

All readings will be available on line. A reading list will be handed out in class and the same list with hyperlinks will be on the professor's personal website.

Attendance in class is important for the seminar to function properly. Repeated absences will be noted, both by the professor and your colleagues. Missing classes will not be considered a valid excuse for inability to answer any exam question. Out of respect for all students in the class, unnecessary disruptions will not be tolerated.

Participation:

All members of the class are expected to read the materials ahead of time and contribute to the class discussion. *Your colleagues as well as the professor will be grading you on your participation.* Furthermore, the class will not work unless we are all able to contribute something to the debate. Critical thinking is what this class is all about.

Term Paper and Presentation:

Students are expected write a term paper. Possible term paper topics are outlined on a separate sheet. Of course, you are free to choose your own topic if you like, but please clarify it with the professor beforehand. *All topics must be cleared with the professor in advance of any substantive work being completed.* A handout on the appropriate preparation of a term paper is contained on a separate sheet. Presentations should be about 25 minutes in length with about 10 minutes left for questions. A sign-up sheet will be circulated in class at the appropriate time. The final paper will be due during class on **Tuesday, April 17th** (unless you present the final day, in which case it will be due the following day).

Final Exam:

The final exam will be a take-home final. It will be handed out during our final class meeting (**Tuesday, April 17th**) and due in my office on **Friday, April 20th** at 12:00 PM sharp.

Absence Policy, and Grade Determination:

Except under extremely unusual circumstances, if a deadline is to be missed for any valid reason (and this does happen), you must give notification before the scheduled deadline by calling my office. This is then to be followed up with appropriate documentation (e.g., a medical certificate) within 48 hours of the missed deadline. Failure to do one or both of these will result in a failing grade on the assignment. No requests will be entertained for an early or delayed final exam.

Your final numerical grade will be weighted as follows:

Class Participation	25%
Term Paper	35%
Term Paper Presentation	10%
Final Exam (take-home)	30%

Letter grades will be based on numerical final grades as follows:

A/A+	83.4+	C	63.4-66.6
A-	80.0-83.3	C-	60.0-63.3
B+	76.7-79.9	D+	56.7-59.9
B	73.4-76.6	D	50.0-56.6
B-	70.0-73.3	F	<50
C+	66.7-69.9		

Students who seek a reappraisal of any exam must do so within one week of the material being returned to the class, otherwise such requests will not be entertained.

Please be aware that academic offences are a serious matter and carry severe penalties. It is the responsibility of the student to familiarize him/herself with the various academic offences (see pp. 80-82 of the 2011/12 University of Lethbridge Calendar).

Students are reminded that the University Final Exam Policy states that only in extraordinary circumstances may students request to write an equivalent invigilated Final Examination at other the scheduled time and place. Students are advised that premature travel plans do not constitute an extraordinary circumstance. All requests for final exam changes must go through the Dean of Arts and Science Office.